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Computer firm moving on

Growth in business means relocating to capital

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Northern News Services

Fort Providence (Dec 08/00) - Jeff Philipp is making a name for his company in the computer technology industry, but he can't continue to do it based in Fort Providence.

Philipp, the owner of SSI Micro, and his family are relocating to Yellowknife so he can oversee the larger branch of his company there.

"It's been growing and growing and growing. It's much easier to attract staff to the Yellowknife operation as it is into Providence," he said, adding that he now has 20 full-time employees in Yellowknife.

He has found himself constantly commuting and spending more time in Yellowknife, so having the family move there only makes sense, he said. Nevertheless, it is a difficult choice.

"I really don't like the idea of moving from Providence. I like Providence a lot. I've been here my whole life," he said. "It's a tough, tough decision, but, by the same token, I love my work ... and we'll still be back and forth to Providence quite a bit."

The Internet service in Fort Providence will continue to be offered, and the Snowshoe Centre will still be used to host workshops and conferences.

Philipp had received a tempting offer to help manage a multi-billion dollar company, who he worked for temporarily in Calgary, but he said he declined in favour of staying of the North.

"We're doing a lot of things right now that I've spent a lot of years developing to get to this point," he said.

Big business

He said 75 per cent of SSI Micro's work is for companies outside of the North.

The focus of his operation has shifted from hardware and software retail sales to consulting and service.

Along with that have come some multi-million dollar contracts, including satellite networks for the Kitikmeot Corporation and, more recently, the NWT Power Corporation. Another agreement for the same type of work has just been signed with a company in eastern Canada.

A number of other deals include delivery of high-speed, wireless Internet.

"Right now we're on the tip of the iceberg in terms of the communications infrastructure that we're going to deploy," said Philipp.

Last month SSI Micro was the recipient of a Next Generation Technology from the Canadian Information Productivity Awards.

Philipp said he anticipates expansion to the south within the next 12 to 18 months. He is planning to establish network operation centres on the east and west coasts.

SSI Micro's inception came in 1992 as part of the Snowshoe Inn group of companies, but it has since separated. Philipp, who was fascinated with computers as a youth, said establishing the business has been his dream.

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